AMENDMENTS

In the Specification:

Please delete paragraph [012], and replace it with the following paragraph:

[012] Figure 1 is an amino acid sequence alignment of the C-terminal thirteen amino acids of the frog apelin polypeptide (SEQ ID NO:18), ~~and~~ the human apelin polypeptide~~,~~ (residues 23-36 of SEQ ID NO:2), and the consensus sequence (SEQ ID NO:19), showing that the C-terminal thirteen amino acids are identical between the two sequences.

Please delete paragraph [043], and replace it with the following paragraph:

[043] In another embodiment of the present invention, the compositions used may inhibit or promote apelin activity indirectly. For example, the compositions may comprise a specific endopeptidase or endopeptidase inhibitor. In particular, the endopeptidase to be used belongs to the subtilisin family of serine proteases (Barr, 1991, Cell 66:1-3). These enzymes cleave specifically after arginine residues (e.g. KR, RR, KXKR, RXRR, KKKR (SEQ ID NO:20), RRRR (SEQ ID NO:21), KXXR, and RXXR) and are likely involved in the cleavage of apelin to the 13 amino acid and 17 amino acid peptides.